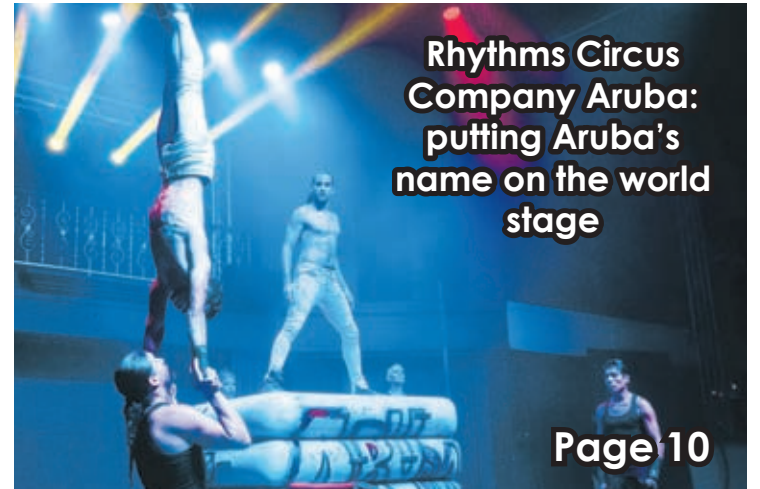




Divided Supreme Court outlaws affirmative action in college admissions



A person protests outside of the Supreme Court in Washington, Thursday, June 29, 2023.
Associated Press



Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins



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Divided Supreme Court outlaws affirmative action in college admissions

From Front

By **MARK SHERMAN**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Thursday struck down affirmative action in college admissions, declaring race cannot be a factor and forcing institutions of higher education to look for new ways to achieve diverse student bodies.

The court's conservative majority effectively overturned cases reaching back 45 years in invalidating admissions plans at Harvard and the University of North Carolina, the nation's oldest private and public colleges, respectively.

The decision, like last year's momentous abortion ruling that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, marked the realization of a long-sought conservative legal goal, this time finding that race-conscious admissions plans violate the Constitution and a law that applies to colleges that receive federal funding, as almost all do.

Those schools will be forced to reshape their admissions practices, especially top schools that are more likely to consider the race of applicants.

Chief Justice John Roberts said that for too long universities have "concluded, wrongly, that the touchstone of an individual's identity is not challenges bested, skills built, or lessons learned but the color of their skin. Our constitutional history does not tolerate that choice."

From the White House, President Joe Biden said he "strongly, strongly" disagreed with the court's ruling and urged colleges to seek other routes to diversity rather than let the ruling "be the last word."

Besides the conservative-liberal split, the fight over affirmative action showed the deep gulf between the three justices of color, each of whom wrote separately and vividly about race in America and where the decision might lead.

Justice Clarence Thomas — the nation's second Black justice, who had long



Activists demonstrate as the Supreme Court hears oral arguments on a pair of cases that could decide the future of affirmative action in college admissions, in Washington, Oct. 31, 2022.

Associated Press

called for an end to affirmative action — wrote that the decision "sees the universities' admissions policies for what they are: rud-derless, race-based preferences designed to ensure a particular racial mix in their entering classes."

Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the court's first Latina, wrote in dissent that the decision "rolls back decades of precedent and momentous progress."

Both Thomas and Sotomayor, the two justices who have acknowledged affirmative action played a role in their admissions to college and law school, took the unusual step of reading summaries of their opinions aloud in the courtroom.

In a separate dissent, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson — the court's first Black female justice — called the decision "truly a tragedy for us all."

Jackson, who sat out the Harvard case because she had been a member of an advisory governing board, wrote, "With let-them-eat-cake obliviousness, today, the majority pulls the rip-cord and announces 'colorblindness for all' by legal fiat. But deeming race irrelevant in law does not make it so in life."

The vote was 6-3 in the North Carolina case and 6-2 in the Harvard case.

Justice Elena Kagan was the other dissenter.

Biden, who quickly stepped before cameras at the White House, said of the nation's colleges: "They should not abandon their commitment to ensure student bodies of diverse backgrounds and experience that reflect all of America." He said colleges should evaluate "adversity overcome" by candidates. In fact, an applicant for admission still can write about, and colleges can consider, "how race affected his or her life, be it through discrimination, inspiration or otherwise," Roberts wrote. But the institutions "may not simply establish through application essays or other means the regime we hold unlawful today," he wrote. Presidents of many colleges quickly issued statements affirming their commitment to diversity regardless of the court's decision. Many said they were still assessing the impact but would follow federal law.

"Harvard will continue to be a vibrant community whose members come from all walks of life, all over the world," school President Lawrence Bacow said in a statement.

President Reginald DesRoches of Rice University in Houston said he was "greatly disappointed" by the decision but "more

resolute than ever" to pursue diversity. "The law may change, but Rice's commitment to diversity will not," he said in a campus message.

Former Presidents Donald Trump and Barack Obama offered starkly different takes on the high court ruling. The decision marked "a great day for America. People with extraordinary ability and everything else necessary for success, including future greatness for our Country, are finally being rewarded," Trump, the current Republican presidential frontrunner, wrote on his social media network.

Obama said in a statement that affirmative action "allowed generations of students like Michelle and me to prove we belonged. Now it's up to all of us to give young people the opportunities they deserve — and help students everywhere benefit from new perspectives."

The Supreme Court had twice upheld race-conscious college admissions programs in the past 20 years, including as recently as 2016.

But that was before the three Trump appointees joined the court. At arguments in late October, all six conservative justices expressed doubts about the practice, which had been

upheld under Supreme Court decisions reaching back to 1978.

Lower courts also had upheld the programs at both UNC and Harvard, rejecting claims that the schools discriminated against white and Asian American applicants.

The college admissions disputes were among several high-profile cases focused on race in America, and were weighed by the conservative-dominated, but most diverse court ever. Among the nine justices are four women, two Black people and a Latina.

The justices earlier in June decided a voting rights case in favor of Black voters in Alabama and rejected a race-based challenge to a Native American child protection law.

The affirmative action cases were brought by conservative activist Edward Blum, who also was behind an earlier challenge against the University of Texas as well as the case that led the court in 2013 to end use of a key provision of the landmark Voting Rights Act. The group argued that the Constitution forbids the use of race in college admissions and called for overturning earlier Supreme Court decisions that said otherwise.

Roberts' opinion effectively did so, both Thomas and the dissenters wrote.

The only institutions of higher education explicitly left out of the ruling were the nation's military academies, Roberts wrote, suggesting that national security interests could affect the legal analysis.

Blum's group had contended that colleges and universities can use other, race-neutral ways to assemble a diverse student body, including by focusing on socioeconomic status and eliminating the preference for children of alumni and major donors.

The schools said that they use race in a limited way, but that eliminating it as a factor altogether would make it much harder to achieve a student body that looks like America. □

Chance to challenge 2020 census numbers is ending

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER**
Associated Press

The window for local, state and tribal governments to challenge their 2020 census figures closes after Friday, and with it the opportunity to correct mistakes in population totals that could cost them millions of dollars in federal funding.

As of this week, almost 160 challenges had been filed through two programs the U.S. Census Bureau started to give governments opportunities to appeal their population totals. Those 2020 census figures help determine how \$2.8 trillion in federal government spending is distributed each year.

Some cities like Brookhaven, Georgia, found out this month that their challenge was successful.

Officials in the city of more than 57,000 residents in metro Atlanta said new parcels were annexed in late 2019 but the 1,200 residents living in them weren't counted toward the city's figures during the once-a-decade head count of every U.S. resident, which started three months later. The U.S. Census Bureau conceded the error, a victory Brookhaven city officials estimate will be worth \$10 million in funding streams over



A pedestrian walks through Town Brookhaven, a mixed-use residential and shopping complex, on Wednesday, June 28, 2023, in Brookhaven, Ga.

Associated Press

this decade.

"This final action ensures that all of Brookhaven's residents were indeed counted as our own," Brookhaven Mayor John Ernst said two weeks ago after receiving a letter from Census Bureau Director Robert Santos confirming the numbers were being revised.

Dozens of other cities like Las Vegas still have their cases pending.

Officials in Nevada's largest

city, with more than 656,000 residents, believe the census missed two homeless shelters with under 1,000 residents during the count. Group quarters including homeless shelters, dorms and prisons were among the most difficult to count as campuses closed and prisons and nursing homes were locked down at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which coincided with the start of the 2020 census.

The Census Bureau created a separate program to handle these challenges. Other cities, like Milwaukee, are still awaiting an answer despite filing their challenges many months ago.

Milwaukee officials in a challenge filed last December said 16,500 residents were overlooked in houses and apartments, primarily in communities of color.

The 2020 census put Wisconsin's largest city at 577,222 residents, down

about 3% from 2010.

City spokesperson Jonathan Fera said in an email that there was "no frustration" surrounding the delay and that "Milwaukee will continue to await a response from the U.S. Census Bureau."

Milwaukee succeeded with another, separate claim that more than 800 jail inmates were missed, part of a challenge organized with other Wisconsin municipalities.

While any changes to the numbers after a successful challenge will be applied to population estimates used for the rest of the decade in determining federal funding, they can't be used to change how many congressional seats each state was allotted during the apportionment process nor for the data used for redrawing political districts.

A final tally on the success of challenges won't be known for several months because of the pending cases.

The 2020 census put the U.S. population at 331.4 million residents.

"It will take several months to complete processing and to notify those who have submitted" a challenge, the Census Bureau said Wednesday. □

Florida agency appeals ruling blocking anti-drag show law

Days after a federal judge temporarily blocked a new Florida law targeting drag shows, the state has appealed that decision.

The Florida agency that regulates businesses asked the judge who ruled against it last week to allow the law's enforcement while its appeal is pending before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. The request was made Wednesday in federal court in Orlando.

U.S. District Judge Gregory Presnell last week granted a preliminary injunction stopping the law from being enforced until a trial is held to determine its constitutionality and he denied the state agency's request

to dismiss it.

Attorneys for the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation asked that the injunction

only apply to the business that challenged the law, saying that the judge's injunction "sweeps beyond Plaintiff to nonparties who

may wish to expose children to live obscene performances in violation of the statute."

The complaint was brought by the owner of a Hamburger Mary's restaurant and bar in Orlando, which regularly hosts drag shows, including family-friendly performances on Sundays that children were invited to attend.

The restaurant owner said the law was overbroad, was written vaguely and violated First Amendment rights by chilling speech.

The new law, championed by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, punished venues for allowing children into "adult live performances."

Though it did not mention

drag shows specifically, the sponsor of the legislation said it was aimed at those performances.

Venues that violated the law faced fines and the possibility for their liquor licenses to be suspended or revoked. Individuals could be charged with a misdemeanor crime.

Ahead of announcing a run for the 2024 GOP presidential nomination this spring, DeSantis made anti-LGBTQ+ legislation a large part of his agenda as governor.

Other bills he signed would ban gender-affirming care for minors and restrict discussion of personal pronouns in schools. □



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican presidential candidate, speaks during a town hall event in Hollis, N.H., Tuesday, June 27, 2023.

Associated Press

Deputy acquitted of all charges for failing to act during deadly Parkland school shooting

By **TERRY SPENCER**

Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP)

— A Florida sheriff's deputy was acquitted Thursday of felony child neglect and other charges for failing to act during the 2018 Parkland school massacre, concluding the first trial in U.S. history of a law enforcement officer for conduct during an on-campus shooting.

Former Broward County Deputy Scot Peterson wept as the verdicts were read. The jury had deliberated for 19 hours over four days.

After court adjourned, Peterson, his family and friends rushed into a group hug as they whooped, hollered and cried. Kevin Bolling, Peterson's private investigator, chased after lead prosecutor Chris Killoran and said something. Killoran turned and snapped at him, "Way to be a good winner" and slapped him on the shoulder. Members of the prosecution team then nudged Killoran out of the courtroom.

"I got my life back. We've got our life back," Peterson said as he exited the courtroom, his arm around his



Former Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School School Resource Officer Scot Peterson reacts as he is found not guilty on all charges at the Broward County Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., on Thursday, June 29, 2023.

wife, Lydia Rodriguez, and his lawyer, Mark Eiglarsh. "It's been an emotional rollercoaster for so long. Calling Mark at 1 in the morning."

He also said people should never forget the victims.

"Only one person was to blame and it was that monster (Nikolas Cruz)," Peterson said. "It wasn't any of

the law enforcement who was on that scene. ... Everybody did the best they could with the information we had." Peterson said he hopes to to one day sit down with the Parkland parents and spouses to tell them "the truth," that he did everything he could. "I would love to talk to them. I have no problem,"

he said. "I'm there."

The campus deputy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Peterson had been charged with failing to confront shooter Cruz during his six-minute attack inside a three-story 1200 classroom building on Feb. 14, 2018, that left 17 dead. He could have received nearly 100 years in prison,

although a sentence even approaching that length would have been highly unlikely given the circumstances and his clean record. He also could have lost his \$104,000 annual pension.

Prosecutors, during their two-week presentation, called to the witness stand students, teachers and law enforcement officers who testified about the horror they experienced and how they knew where Cruz was. Some said they knew for certain that the shots were coming from the 1200 building. Prosecutors also called a training supervisor who testified Peterson did not follow protocols for confronting an active shooter.

During his two-day presentation, Peterson's attorney, Eiglarsh, called several deputies who arrived during the shooting and students and teachers who testified they did not think the shots were coming from the 1200 building.

Peterson, who did not testify, has said that because of echoes, he could not pinpoint the shooter's location. □

Associated Press

With Muslim members away for Eid, Minneapolis City Council kills rent control measure



Cars drive past the Minneapolis City Hall on June 28, 2023, in Minnesota.

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — While three Muslim council members were away to observe the Eid al-Adha holiday, the Minneapolis City Council narrowly voted to kill a measure that would have put a rent control question on the ballot this fall.

A majority of the council supports a 3% annual residential rent cap. But with Aisha Chughtai, Jeremiah Ellison and Jamal Osman out on Wednesday, the council voted not to move the measure forward, Minnesota Public Radio reported. "Islamophobia!" one person in the audience blurted out during the meeting, the Star Tri-

bune reported. Such accusations raged on Twitter, while at the same time, rent control opponents expressed relief the issue was off the table.

The Wednesday meeting was scheduled more than a year ago to accommodate Eid, which at the time had been predicted to fall on Thursday, Minnesota Public Radio reported. But the date is subject to change depending on lunar observations.

According to City Clerk Casey Carl, the first time anyone raised a concern about Eid was on Monday too late to change the date of the council

meeting under state law, the Star Tribune reported. Carl apologized, but added that for years the city clerk's office has relied on council members to make it aware of religious or cultural conflicts.

In a statement released after the vote, Ellison, Osman and Chughtai criticized the vote as going against "the spirit of inclusion Minneapolis prides itself on," adding that council leadership could have scheduled the meeting at a later date, delayed the vote to the next full council meeting or advanced the policy to committee for further changes. □

Arms embargo and deployment of special force needed for Haiti

By **EVENS SANON** and
DÁNICA COTO
PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)

— A U.N. human rights expert said Wednesday that a specialized international force is needed to help fight gang violence in Haiti and that a weapons embargo should be implemented immediately. William O'Neill, who was appointed expert on human rights in Haiti in April, spoke at the end of a 10-day trip during which he met with civil society leaders, government officials and victims of gang violence. "I found a country bruised by violence, misery, fear and suffering," he said, adding that all types of human rights are being violated. "It is urgent to take action. The survival of an entire nation is at stake." O'Neill said the absence of government is palpable and that the lack of response by officials is affecting people's access to water, food, health, education and housing. He added that while Haitian authorities face "immense challenges," the government has a duty to respond within its limited capabilities. "Entire neighborhoods are left to their fate, without access to any public ser-



People displaced by gang violence stand in Jean-Kere Almicar's front yard, where they have sought refuge, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Sunday, June 4, 2023.

vice," he said. O'Neill's visit comes as an understaffed and under-resourced police department struggles to fight against warring gangs who have grown more powerful since the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, with gangs now estimated to control up to 80% of the capital. The violence has led to an increase in starvation, with people unable to leave their homes and trucks unable to transport

goods to Port-au-Prince and beyond. The surge in killings, rapes and kidnappings in Haiti has led to a violent uprising, with civilians killing nearly 200 people since April in their fight against suspected gang members. The uprising has been criticized by some who worry that innocent people are being targeted, while O'Neill said the movement reflected a failure of Haiti's judicial system. "History has shown

that popular justice and its many excesses have never made it possible to resolve violence," he said. O'Neill said deploying a specialized international force that would work alongside Haiti's National Police "is essential to restore the freedom of movement." He also said that an embargo on arms, especially those from the U.S., is crucial given that no weapons are produced in Haiti. Several U.N. officials have

called for such a deployment, a request first made by Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry in October last year, but the U.N. Security Council has not taken action, opting instead to impose sanctions. In an aside with The Associated Press after the press conference, O'Neill said he envisioned a specialized police force skilled at dealing with gangs and organized crime working alongside Haiti's National Police, with local authorities taking the lead. He said such a force would provide advice, guidance and possibly backup. "Whoever comes, if they come, is not going to stay forever," he said. O'Neill also noted that despite calls for Haiti to hold general elections, it's currently not safe to do so. O'Neill also criticized what he called the inhumane conditions that inmates at the main prison in Port-au-Prince and in Cap-Haitien face, noting that more than 200 of them died last year. "I ask the authorities to make every effort to allow detainees to live in dignity; this includes immediate and constant access to basic needs," he said. □

Associated Press

Philippines considering U.S. request to host visa processing center

By **JIM GOMEZ**
Associated Press
MANILA, Philippines (AP)

— Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Thursday that a request for his country to temporarily host a U.S. immigrant visa processing center for thousands of Afghan nationals faces security and other concerns but is still being considered by his administration. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken first relayed the request to his Philippine counterpart last year, and President Joe Biden discussed the request when Marcos visited the United States in May, Philippine officials said. The full details of the re-

quest, which remains under negotiations between the treaty allies, have not been made public, but Marcos said he was told by American officials that only a maximum of 1,000 Afghan nationals would be allowed to stay in the Philippines at any one time while



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. gestures as he visits an evacuation center at Guinobatan, Albay province, northeastern Philippines, on June 14, 2023.

Associated Press

their special immigrant visas are being processed. A Philippine official said an initial 600 Afghan nationals would be allowed in a "pilot phase" if the U.S. proposal gets approved. The proposal was still being discussed by national security, law enforcement, foreign affairs and other Philippine agencies before submitting a recommendation to Marcos, said the official, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to discuss the issue publicly. The Afghan nationals to be considered for resettlement primarily worked for the U.S. government in Afghanistan or were deemed

eligible for U.S. special immigrant visas but were left behind when Washington withdrew from the country as Taliban militants took back power in a chaotic period in August 2021. "We want to help," Marcos said in answer to a question at a news conference. But, he said, there are security concerns and "even more difficult legal and logistical issues because if the plan as it stands runs exactly as it's planned, that's nice, we won't have any problem. But what plan ever ran exactly as you had hoped?" "It's entirely possible that we will not find a way to make it happen," he added. □

Germany's 5.5 million Muslims are often exposed to racism

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER

Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Racism, hatred and sometimes violence against Muslims in Germany are widespread and often part of their everyday experience, according to a new report presented at the interior ministry in Berlin on Thursday.

The Independent Group of Experts on Muslim Hostility worked for three years on the comprehensive report about racism and hostility toward the country's 5.5 million Muslims. The group analyzed scientific studies, police crime statistics and documentation of anti-Muslim incidents by anti-discrimination agencies, counseling centers and nongovernmental organizations.

The report concludes that at least one third of Muslims in Germany have experienced hostility due to their religion. However, the experts pointed out that the real numbers are likely vastly higher since only 10% of Muslims appear to report hostility and hate crimes against them.

"Muslim life belongs to Germany as a matter of course," Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said in a



A man stands inside the Abu-Bakr-Mosque in Frankfurt, Germany, Thursday, June 29, 2023.

Associated Press

statement. "This makes the findings of this first comprehensive report on Muslim hostility in Germany all the more bitter."

"Muslims in Germany experience exclusion and discrimination in their everyday lives right up to hatred and violence," she added. "It is very important to make this visible and to raise awareness of resentment that is still widespread."

German Muslims are not only exposed to blunt racism but also to daily stereo-

typing from kindergarten to old age, the experts said.

The group found that negative prejudice toward the community included "the attribution of widespread, largely unchangeable, backward-thinking and threatening characteristics to Muslims and people perceived as Muslim."

These stereotypes lead to exclusion and discrimination by Germany's mainstream society which often perceives Muslims as "the others," even though 50%

of Muslims in the country have German passports.

Germany's Muslim community is diverse, with the majority claiming Turkish roots. Others originally emigrated from Arabic countries such as Morocco or Lebanon. Many first came to West Germany more than 60 years ago, when they were recruited as "guest workers" to help the country advance economically.

The first generation of Muslim immigrants were mostly employed in coal mining,

steel production and the auto industry. Many who initially came as temporary workers decided to stay and bring their families, giving Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt and other cities in western and southwestern Germany large immigrant communities.

About 19 million people, or 23% of Germany's population today, either immigrated to the country since 1950 or are the children of immigrants not just of Muslim background but also from countries such as Poland, Romania, African or Asian countries, and most recently Ukraine.

The researchers found that Muslim hostility is common in basically every aspect of life from schools to the police, national, regional and municipal agencies, the private job sector, the housing market, the media and politics.

Karima Benbrahim, one of the authors of the study, said that a joint effort is needed by society and its institutions to both make people aware of Muslim hostility and fight it.

"Muslim hostility is something that affects everyone in this society and not just those concerned," she said. □

Italian police: Migrant smugglers gave children sleeping pills

MILAN (AP) — Traffickers in a migrant smuggling cell busted in a cross-national investigation administered sleeping pills to children to

prevent them from making noise as they were carried at night across the Croatian-Slovenian border, Italian police said Thursday.



Slovenian soldiers deployed for the removal of border fence remove razor wire at the border crossing with Croatia in Krmacina, Slovenia, on July 15, 2022.

Associated Press

Police in the northeastern Italian city of Trieste identified 26 suspects in the cell, part of a larger ring, all Albanian and Kosovo citizens, many residents of Italy. Seven have been arrested, six were being sought on arrest warrants on suspicion of criminal association aimed at aiding illegal immigration and another 13 remained under investigation.

The investigation was launched in 2021, before Croatia dropped its border controls earlier this year upon joining the EU's Schengen-area passport-free travel zone.

According to Italian police, migrants were brought by car to the Croatian-Slove-

nian border, then walked across at night, and picked up on the other side. While children were given sleeping pills, adults were jacked up on "huge amounts" of energy drinks to make the trek.

"They were using shameful methods," Trieste police chief Pietro Ostuni told The Associated Press.

In some instances, the smugglers beat up the migrants to make them walk, police said. Migrants paid between 200 euros and 250 euros for the border crossing, a key part of the so-called Balkan smuggling route.

The people being smuggled were mostly from Afghanistan, Bangladesh

and Pakistan, along with some Syrians, Ostuni said.

Prefect Francesco Messina said the cell of 26 was broken up with help from Croatian and Slovenian police. Most of the migrants being trafficked across the border did not intend for Italy to be their final destination, he added.

Messina did not say what their final destination was but it is common for migrants to want to head to northern Europe.

"This is of course a limited operation and won't lower the passage of migrants in the short-term, but it creates an awareness that can bring us to a greater containment of this phenomenon," he said. □

Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins

According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Fa-

ther Algemesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law, Miguel Álvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book, The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Silvester came to Aruba from Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteen century many inhabitants the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed

that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista, people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays,



only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water

tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past. □



Why You Should Not Miss Aruba's Free City Center Street Car Tour



ORANJESTAD - Aruba's City Center Street Car - or as we call it in Dutch; "Tram van Oranjestad" - is a single track tram line in Oranjestad, the capital city of Aruba. It was inaugurated on 22 December 2012, being the first and so far the only passenger rail service on Aruba and the rest of the Dutch Caribbean.

an. There are two trolleys, a single-deck one with 42 seats and a double-decker with 64 seats. The line was inspired by the popular battery-powered streetcar operation at the Grove in Los Angeles, USA. Aruba's streetcars are powered by hydrogen fuel cells, which are charged by the island's year-round trade winds.

Caya Betico Croes, mostly referred to as our "main street" has been developed into a pollution-free pedestrian mall. The double-decker offers you a 360 degree view of the downtown area with a picture perfect scenery of the island's clear blue skies. Who would not enjoy a ride on

this beautiful and naturally air-conditioned vehicle? The tour consists of a total of 9 stops approximately 200 meters apart from each other; all stops are clearly marked. The tram will bring you close to different museums, historical plazas, monuments, the Protestant church, Aruba's high-end mall, retail shops, and a variety of local and international cuisine restaurants. The "I love Aruba" trademark also belongs to that list. The third stop on the route is close to a 5-minute

walk to the famous Renaissance Marina showcasing luxurious yachts and Aruba's blue waters.

The "Tram van Oranjestad" starts from a balloon loop near the Port of Call and serves the downtown area and ends at Plaza Nicky. The first ride starts at 10:00 am sharp with intervals of 25 minutes. The last trolley departs from the cruise port at 5:00pm. Don't miss this tour of the beautiful Aruba's City Center- it is free for all! □



Take your car off the beaten track to meet our monuments and their stories

ORANJESTAD — The mix of cultures in Aruba is very visible in its architecture as -like in all cultures-, monuments reflect your history and your people. If you take the chance to leave the beach for a little while and take your car off the beaten track you will be surprised what you see. Anne Witsenburg is director of the Monument Fund Aruba (SMFA) and points out precisely why a monumental trip should not lack in your vacation's itinerary.

The fund owns 15 monuments, out of the 36 protected monuments in the island. "But there are over 300 more monuments on the list to be protected and of course we dream to see that become reality as soon as possible." The international guidelines that apply for monuments decide whether it will be a protected monument or not. "The building or object needs to be at least 50 years old, a special value in architecture or to history or to the people of Aruba is required and there has to be a certain uniqueness. If it was changed too much throughout time or there are already any of the same kind it is a no go."

Useless islands

There is a difference between the islands when it comes to monuments, as Witsenburg explains. "That goes back to their history. Curacao used to be a very wealthy island where many -mainly Dutch- merchants lived close together and that is the reason you find this typical colonial Dutch style buildings



packed in certain areas nowadays. They have more than 20 years of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) heritage. Than scattered around the rest of the island you will see the smaller country houses." Aruba and Bonaire were called the useless islands in the colonial time, so any Indian willing to live here was given a small piece of land to build his home. "That is the reason you find all these typical small houses scattered around the island. We actually have the same amount of monuments as Curacao though way smaller."

Magic local touch

Some of the monuments owned by the Monument Fund Aruba are the light house, town hall, water tanks in both Oranjestad and San Nicolas. "We are wealthy in different styled monuments and my suggestion is to discover this world outside of the tourist zone. The book Monu-

mental Guide comes in handy as there are three maps inside that guide you to the monuments and tell you about them. But there are also possibilities to have your personal people guide. And the best is that I can almost guarantee you the magic of the local touch when you bump into an authentic cunucu house (country house) and talk to the owners. They will proudly share their family history with you."

Outside inspiration

The Monument Fund acquires or buys monuments and restores them back into their former glory. Than they rent it out. "That sounds easy, but it is incredibly complex as most monuments have multiple owners due to the fact that inheritances are split and all need to decide upon the selling." They cooperate with the government office of monuments because they set the rules of what you can and cannot do to a pro-

ected monument. "We also have the task to maintain the buildings which is an ongoing process. The wind, the salt in the air and the sun that not only burns human bodies but also buildings are huge challenges. Next to that we do education, create awareness and maintain public relations about our monuments."

The office of the Monument Fund is actually located in a monument itself. The building is beautiful and has a tropical style. "This house goes back to the 1920's when it was built as a vacation house by Aruban entrepreneur Croes. He and his family came here to the outdoors as in those times there was only cunucu (countryside) here. They had big parties and enjoyed leisure time with family and friends." Richer Arubans at that time looked outwards for architecture inspiration as that was considered chic, Witsenburg explains. Either to

the US (art deco style like the water tower in San Nicolas), Holland (Dutch colonial style) or Colombia/Venezuela. "This house is inspired by a villa around Cartagena, Colombia. The ideas mostly came from the wives", she says laughing.

Sustainable driven

Sustainability is a big thing to the Monument Fund Aruba. Witsenburg: "Obviously to restore old buildings and not destroy them to build new ones is already sustainable in itself. Than we have the technical sustainability as in using the right materials and techniques but also the social sustainability. That includes looking at the non-tangible part of heritage: the stories to be told, the music to be played, the dinners that were cooked in the places we try to restore. That keeps it alive. Most of our monuments are meant to be lived in so we would like to reintroduce the joy of living in a monument. We work together with private companies to look into that." In their office they installed solar panels, use LED lightning and recently implemented an electrical charging point for electric vehicles.

The Monument Fund Aruba is open every day from Monday to Friday from 8am to 5pm. You are more than welcome to ask for information, guiding and help. For more information check out their Facebook page stichting monumenten fonds aruba and the website <http://www.monumentenfondsaruba.com>.



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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Elizabeth **Griffin from Long Branch, NJ.**

She wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me.... fun, sun and flamingos."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! ☐



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Rhythms Circus Company Aruba: putting Aruba's name on the world stage



Rhythms Circus Company Aruba is a talented group of young people working daily to present their art in the form of acrobatics, dancing, acting and singing. After an impactful participation in one of America's biggest talent shows, they are now bringing their amazing talent to Aruba!

In a show full of light, music, and with performances to famous musical figures like Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson and Tina Turner, the group consisting of 15 people from various countries delights the audience with their artistic prowess at the Paseo Herencia Mall, every Wednesday and Friday starting at 7pm. Each day has a different show, so you can attend both nights for the complete experience!

The group, under the leadership of directors and creators Diego Jaramillo and Yamila Hernandez are opening the doors to the ballroom to our local audience as well as our visitors so that everyone can have the privilege of experiencing this wonderful show.

Hernandez explained that the idea for

this project started in 2010 when she came to work in Aruba. After being on the island for a while she decided to stay and live here, and she met Diego Jaramillo, who is currently her partner. Together they came with the idea to establish a company together with other professional artists, with the goal of living from their art.

Hernandez says that the work is hard – all of the performers are professional artists, and while the production of the show is not a challenge for them, selling the idea proved difficult since at the time, there weren't any shows of its kind on the island.

America's Got Talent

Currently they are offering a show with music, choreography and at the end, they have a shocking acrobatics ending, one that was seen by thousands of people around the world when the group travelled to Los Angeles in the United States to represent Aruba in America's Got Talent. Hernandez said that the show was very important for them to meet the public present because people could experience this performance live and right before their eyes.

Their presentation in America's Got Talent "was incredible" and they were able to meet the jury and many other artists staying there for three months. But the exhaustion and physical toll was so great that Diego suffered an accident, and because of this, they had to cancel all future commitments.

"This is work for which you must have a lot of respect. Circus as such implies a lot of risk, we have to give all of ourselves, we need to be in a physical state where you cannot stop training, there needs to be steadfastness; but if you go past the



limit, your body cannot handle it. It seems that during this tour we went over the limit and Diego was injured right when we had to go sign up for the next part of the tour with America's Got Talent. That was frustrating," Yamila explained.


Thanks to their performance in America's Got Talent, they received a lot of offers. However, before that they travelled to Hungary, to the Budapest Circus Festival, and afterwards they decided to return to and remain in Aruba to show their talents up close at home.

Future projects

Next month in July the group is travelling to Italy to perform at the show "Tu si que vales", and in August they are travelling to France for the program "La France a un Incroyable Talent", completing their travels in November in China, to perform at the Wuqiao International Circus Festival.

Even so, "these are short tours of maximum two weeks, because we are committed to our show in Aruba," Yamila explained.

Reservations and tickets

To make a reservation to see this incredible display of creativity and acrobatics, scan the QR code which will take you directly to their website for a booking. To find more information about RCCA, please visit their Instagram page @rccaruba. 



National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches—a very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok



National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights,

adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is and adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, ATV or 4x4 vehicle.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave. The bird drawing in the park logo is a copy of one of these historical artistic expressions.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agri-

cultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these

adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

For the management of the park, a dedicated foundation "Fundacion Parke Nacional Arikok" (FPNA), known today as the Aruba National Park Foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under FPNA management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of FPNA. In 2019 management plans will be established for the new MPAs which include: coral reefs, sea grass beds, mangrove systems, a large diversity of breeding seabirds. Parke Marino Aruba also contains potential shark nursery areas, endangered sea turtle nesting beaches and marine mammal nursery areas. □



CROSSWORD

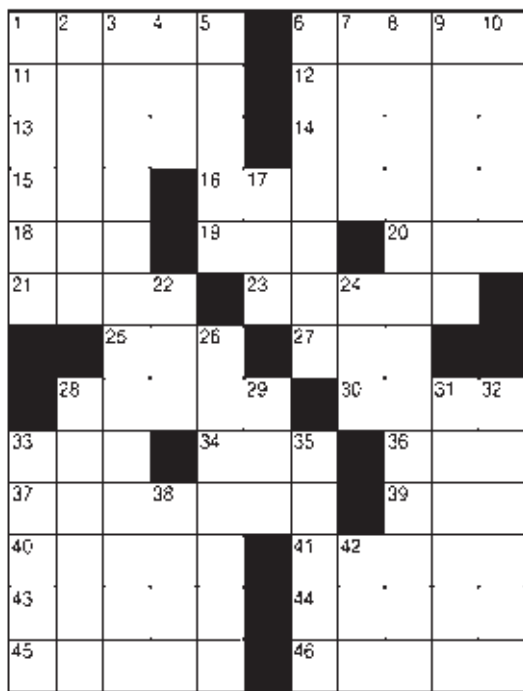
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 41 Loosen, as laces
 - 1 Cut's counter-part
 - 6 Buttes' cousins
 - 11 Mink's cousin
 - 12 Chosen few



Yesterday's answer

- DOWN**
- 8 In a good position
 - 1 Put online
 - 2 Helper of Perseus
 - 3 Unmoving
 - 4 Baseball's Williams
 - 5 Put up
 - 6 "Brand New Key" singer
 - 7 Yale students
 - 9 Acropolis setting
 - 10 Clair-voyants
 - 17 Gusher output
 - 22 Mineo of movies
 - 24 Freud topic
 - 26 2-Down, for one
 - 28 Slow tempo
 - 29 Court party
 - 31 British party
 - 32 Emphasis
 - 33 Run up
 - 35 Curaçao's neighbor
 - 38 Balm ingredient
 - 42 Pen point



6-30

AXYDI.BAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three I's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-30

CRYPTOQUOTE

QD Q PON FX ZOX. Q'N EKFGJK
SOCHOEX DEGF YPK BOUKCNOE
OUYGWKYPKE OCN POJK OC
KVYEO SHUX QCIYKON.
EGOUN NOPU

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: FOOD BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER ON MANY DIFFERENT LEVELS. IT'S NOURISHMENT OF THE SOUL AND BODY. IT'S TRULY LOVE. — GIADA DE LAURENTIIS

Bed Bath & Beyond lives on!(line). Overstock.com buys rights to bankrupt retailer and changes name

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

By AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Bed & Bath & Beyond will live on, online at least, after Overstock.com acquired the bankrupt retail chain's intellectual property assets for \$21.5 million.

The online retailer Overstock.com is dumping its name online and will become Bed & Bath & Beyond, which declared bankruptcy earlier this year. Overstock.com's CEO Jonathan Johnson told The Associated Press in a phone interview on Thursday that the company is considering changing its corporate name but won't make any decisions until after it digests the assets.

The switcheroo to a very recognizable brand was cheered on Wall Street. Shares of Overstock.com Inc., based in Midvale, Utah, soared nearly 20% during afternoon trading Thursday.

The deal doesn't include



Shoppers enter exit a Bed Bath & Beyond store Monday, May 29, 2023, in Glendale, Colo.

Associated Press

Bed Bath & Beyond stores, the last of which are expected to be shuttered Friday, or the Buybuy Baby chain.

The name change will roll out in Canada next month and in August, a relaunch of the company's website and mobile app as Bed Bath & Beyond will appear in the U.S. Those visiting overstock.com will be redirected to bedbathandbe-

yond.com.

The name Overstock still confuses some customers and suppliers who thought it was a liquidator. That's how it got its start in 1999. It transformed in 2004 into a general merchandise retailer, selling a wide variety of items. In 2021, Overstock finetuned its strategy to focus on furniture and home decor, getting rid of items like clothing. □

Amazon wants small businesses to help make deliveries



An Amazon logo appears on a delivery van, Oct. 1, 2020, in Boston.

Associated Press

By MAE ANDERSON

AP Business Writer

Many small businesses have long relied on Ama-

zon's platform and delivery pipeline to boost their business. Now, Amazon wants to enlist them to help with

deliveries, too.

The e-commerce giant on Monday officially launched a program it has been piloting since 2020 that pays small business owners to deliver packages during the "last mile" of delivery to customers' doorsteps. Axios first reported the launch.

Amazon has long been working on finding new ways to deliver packages faster and more efficiently, including working with third-party delivery companies, increasing its warehouse space and making other moves.

The program, called Amazon Hub Delivery, will operate in 23 states and focus on rural areas and large, dense cities including Seattle, New York, Los Angeles, Boston and Hoboken, New Jersey. □

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24/7

Dolphin moms use baby talk to call to their young, recordings show

By CHRISTINA LARSON
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — You know instantly when someone is speaking to an infant or small child. It turns out that dolphin mothers also use a kind of high-pitched baby talk.

A study published Monday found that female bottlenose dolphins change their tone when addressing their calves. Researchers recorded the signature whistles of 19 mother dolphins in Florida, when accompanied by their young offspring and when swimming alone or with other adults. The dolphin signature whistle is a unique and important signal akin to calling out their own name.

"They use these whistles to keep track of each other. They're periodically saying, 'I'm here, I'm here'," said study co-author Laela Sayigh, a Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution marine biologist in Massachusetts. When directing the signal to their calves, the mother's whistle pitch is higher and her pitch range is greater than usual, according to the study published in the journal, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"That was true for every one of the moms in the study, all 19 of them," said biologist Peter Tyack, a study co-author from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

Obtaining this data was no simple feat. Over more than three decades, scientists placed special microphones multiple times on the same wild dolphin mothers in Florida's Sarasota Bay to record their signature whistles. That included years when they had calves and when they didn't dolphin calves stay with their mothers for an average of three years in Sarasota, and sometimes longer. Fathers don't play a prolonged role in parenting.

"This is unprecedented,



In this undated photo, bottlenose dolphins swim in open waters off Sarasota Bay, Florida. In this undated photo, bottlenose dolphins swim in open waters off Sarasota Bay, Florida.

Associated Press

absolutely fantastic data," said Mauricio Cantor, an Oregon State University marine biologist who was not involved in the study. "This study is the result of so much research effort."

Why people, dolphins or other creatures use baby talk isn't certain, but scientists believe it may help offspring learn to pronounce novel sounds. Research dating back to the 1980s suggests that human infants may pay more attention to speech with a greater pitch range. Female rhesus monkeys may alter their calls to attract and hold offspring's attention. And

Zebra finches elevate their pitch and slow down their songs to address chicks, perhaps making it easier to learn birdsong.

For the dolphin study, the researchers focused solely on the signature call, so they don't know if dolphins also use baby talk for other exchanges or whether it helps their offspring learn to "talk" as it seems to do with humans.

"It would make sense if there are similar adaptations in bottlenose dolphins a long lived, highly acoustic species," where calves must learn to vocalize many sounds to commu-

nicate, said Frants Jensen, a behavioral ecologist at Denmark's Aarhus University and a study co-author. Another possible reason for using specific pitches is to catch the kids' attention. "It's really important for a calf to know 'Oh, Mom is talking to me now' versus just announcing her presence to someone else," added Janet Mann, a marine biologist at Georgetown University, who was not involved in the study. □

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Who wants to be a game show host? These days, you already have to be famous

By **DAVID BAUDER**

AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — When producers of “Wheel of Fortune” named Ryan Seacrest probably the most ubiquitous man on entertainment television as its next host this week, it surprised virtually no one.

The idea that Sony Pictures Television would appoint someone relatively unknown as the figurehead of one of its most valuable properties was far-fetched. But it wasn’t always that way for a genre of television that minted such celebrities like late “Jeopardy!” host Alex Trebek, Bob Barker of “The Price is Right” and current “Wheel of Fortune” emcee Pat Sajak.

With Sajak’s impending retirement, after the show’s next season, it’s the end of an era: Game shows are now the provenance of the already famous. Why is Pat Sajak the last of his breed?

Back in 1984, a much younger Sajak was pictured on the cover of TV Guide alongside Wink Martindale, Monty Hall, Bill Cullen, Jack Barry and Barker.

Each of the other men was known primarily as broadcast television game show hosts.

Now, so is Sajak. He has a handful of other entries



This image released by CBS Media Ventures shows Vanna White, left, and Pat Sajak, host of “Wheel of Fortune.”

on his resume, disc jockey (many of his ilk also got their start in radio) and television weatherman among them. But he was 35 years old when he started hosting “Wheel of Fortune” and will be 77 when he leaves next year. He’ll be forever known for standing on-stage at the wheel, with Vanna White at the board. “He’s kind of the last of the old school,” said Adam Nedeff, author and researcher for the National Archive of Game Show History at the Strong National

Museum of Play in Rochester, New York.

Game shows were once shown live, or taped with hardly any interruptions, so the skill of an experienced broadcaster used to those conditions was prized, Nedeff said.

Dick Clark would need it when taping 10 episodes of “The 10,000 Pyramid” in a day.

Trek similarly had a strong pedigree of television hosting, much of it in Canada, before he became host of “Jeopardy!”

Where’s the pipeline now? Game shows were once a mainstay of daytime broadcast television, the land of the unhip, but are much less common today. The Game Show Network and Buzzr exist on cable for aficionados, but are heavy on reruns of the classics.

And, let’s be honest, who watches, anyway?

To create interest in game shows these days, producers look for a name. That makes actors, comics or other celebrities attractive to front these shows (some

of which have nevertheless been canceled) people like Drew Carey (“The Price Is Right”), Howie Mandel (“Deal or No Deal”), Meredith Vieira (“Who Wants to be a Millionaire?”), Wayne Brady (“Let’s Make a Deal”), Steve Harvey (“Family Feud”), Alec Baldwin (“Match Game”), Michael Strahan (“The \$100,000 Pyramid”) and Mayim Bialik (“Jeopardy!”). Ken Jennings wasn’t an actor, but any fan of “Jeopardy!” knew who he was.

“We have a generation of stars who grew up watching game shows,” Nedeff said.

“We have just reached a point where nobody sees any shame in hosting a game show.”

No one considers a game show low-rent anymore.

And why should they? Carey replaced Barker on “The Price is Right” in 2007. Soon, many viewers will know him as a game show host instead of an actor and comedian, if they don’t already.

Why would he leave? Such relatively easy money is why a job like “Wheel of Fortune” is coveted; Whoopi Goldberg openly campaigned for the job. And it’s behind the request Jamie Foxx surprised his management with in the 2010s. □

Associated Press

National Geographic will end newsstand sales of magazine next year, focus on subscriptions, digital



The July 2023 edition of National Geographic is for sale at a newsstand, Thursday, June 29, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The familiar yellow-bordered cover of the monthly National Geographic will no longer be for sale on newsstands starting next year, part of cutbacks affecting the venerable magazine.

The company’s focus is turning to its digital product and it will offer special editions on newsstands, a spokesman said on Thursday. Subscribers will still get a printed copy each month. Newsstand sales account for a small percentage of the magazine’s monthly circulation of just below 1.8 million copies, the magazine said. Even a magazine that started publishing in 1888 isn’t immune to financial headwinds affecting the media. Known best for its colorful photography from around the world, the magazine was started more than a century

ago by the National Geographic Society, which supports science and exploration. Control of National Geographic has changed twice in the past decade, first in a sale to 20th Century Fox before being acquired by the Walt Disney Corp. in 2019. It has been hit by a series of layoffs. Craig Welch posted on Twitter on Wednesday that his new issue of the magazine just arrived, featuring his 16th and last feature as a senior writer for the magazine. “NatGeo is laying off all of its staff writers,” he wrote. The magazine said while it’s accurate it no longer has anyone with the title of “writer” anymore, it has people who both write and edit. Instead, it will turn to non-staffers to author stories. The changes occurred as the result of a reorganization in April. □

NFL suspends 3 players indefinitely, fourth gets 6 games for violating gambling policy

By **MICHAEL MAROT**
AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The NFL suspended three players indefinitely Thursday for violating the league's gambling policy and a fourth was sidelined for six games. Cornerback Isaiah Rodgers Sr., a projected starter for the Indianapolis Colts, and his new teammate Rashod Berry, a backup defensive end, both received indefinite suspensions and were subsequently waived by the team.

Rodgers, Berry and free agent Demetrius Taylor, who also received an indefinite suspension, cannot seek reinstatement until after the 2023 season. Taylor bet on NFL games in 2022 and Rodgers faced the same accusation.

The Colts wasted no time in deciding what to do.

"We have made the following roster moves as a consequence of the determination that these players violated the league's gambling policy," Indy general manager Chris Ballard said in a statement. "The integrity of the game is of the utmost importance. As an organization we will con-



Detroit Lions defensive lineman Demetrius Taylor works out during an NFL football practice in Allen Park, Mich., Saturday, May 14, 2022.

tinue to educate our players, coaches, and staff on the policies in place and the significant consequences that may occur with violations." Tennessee Titans right tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere was suspended for the first six games of the 2023 season for betting on non-NFL sports at the team's facility. He is eligible

to participate in all offseason and preseason activities, including preseason games. Petit-Frere and Berry were college teammates at Ohio State.

"We believe in Nick and know that he has deep respect for the integrity of the game and our organization," the Titans said in a statement. "We will con-

tinue to emphasize to our players the importance of understanding and adhering to league rules and policies."

The NFL's gambling policy bars players, coaches and league and team officials from betting on NFL games, placing bets at team facilities or team hotels or having someone else place a

bet for them, among other restrictions.

In April, the NFL suspended five players, four of them with the Detroit Lions, for gambling infractions.

The Lions released three players receivers Quintez Cephus and Stanley Berryhill and safety C.J. Moore. Cephus and Moore were suspended indefinitely for betting on NFL games while Berryhill and receiver Jameson Williams each drew six-game suspensions for betting on non-NFL games.

Williams, the No. 12 overall pick in the 2022 draft, remains on Detroit's roster.

Washington Commanders defensive end Shaka Toney also received an indefinite suspension in April for betting on NFL games, and in 2022 the NFL gave then-Atlanta Falcons receiver Calvin Ridley a season-long suspension for betting. He was reinstated in March and now plays for Jacksonville. Losing Rodgers is a big blow to a Colts secondary already under reconstruction. The fourth-year player from UMass was expected to add a veteran voice in a young position room. □

Associated Press

Inter Miami still targeting July 21 for Messi debut

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Sports Writer

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Inter Miami is still targeting a July 21 debut match for Lionel Messi, though stopped short Thursday of saying that date was guaranteed.

Sporting Director Chris Henderson said that the paperwork for Messi and new coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino is still being processed. Martino was introduced by the team Wednesday but cannot actually begin coaching until his visa process is complete; Messi is expected to sign with the team sometime in early July and there are plans for an introduction event July

16.

"With regard to Leo, the terms are agreed but we are working on the paperwork with Major League Soccer so those are going to take time to finish," Henderson said. "But we hope that there is a time in mid-late July that he's ready to go, but that's just going to be up to how he finishes all the paperwork."

Some tickets for the July 21 Leagues Cup match against Cruz Azul are on the secondary markets for more than \$10,000 apiece, clearly in anticipation of it being Messi's debut with the club. He announced earlier this month that he would be joining MLS.

The seven-time Ballon d'Or winner the trophy given annually to the world's best player decided to make his move to MLS after two years with Paris Saint-Germain. Messi, who just turned 36, filled the only significant unchecked box on his resume back in December by leading Argentina to the World Cup title.

He is expected to make between \$50 million and \$60 million annually with Inter Miami, the club confirmed last week.

Messi was in Argentina recently, where he played a couple of friendly matches last weekend farewell celebrity games to honor former Argentina teammates



Argentinian soccer player Lionel Messi smiles during Maximiliano Rodriguez's farewell match at Marcelo Bielsa stadium in Rosario, Argentina, Saturday, June 24, 2023.

Associated Press

Juan Riquelme in Buenos Aires and Maxi Rodriguez in Messi's hometown of Rosario and is now vacationing in advance of his arrival in South Florida.

Inter Miami is 5-13-0 in MLS play this season, the worst record of the 15 teams in

the Eastern Conference. Henderson said the team hopes the signings of Messi, Martino and more new players represent "a new beginning for the club."

"The goal is to make the playoffs this year," Henderson said. □



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With small markets and small payrolls, the AL and NL Centrals are lagging again

By **STEVE MEGARGEE**
AP Sports Writer

The AL Central-leading Cleveland Guardians have been below .500 since late April. The Cincinnati Reds top the NL Central standings while on an 86-win pace.

Welcome to life in baseball's two weakest divisions, where even the best teams struggle to win more games than they lose.

Cleveland (39-40) overtook the Minnesota Twins (40-42) in the AL Central standings on Wednesday, but the Guardians would be dead last if they played in the AL East. This is the first time in 15 years that an entire division has been below .500 this late in a season.

"You know, I've been in a lot of different scenarios," said Detroit Tigers manager A.J. Hinch, whose team is 34-45 but only five games off the AL Central lead. "This is a little bit unique to the Central right now. But a lot of baseball left to play for a lot of teams, but certainly weird."

It's not much better in the NL Central, though Cincinnati (43-38) has come on strong lately thanks to an exciting rookie class headed by sensational shortstop Elly De La Cruz. The Reds were in last place just over a month ago but now lead the division by a half-game over the Milwaukee Brewers (42-38) after winning 14 of their last 17.

These aren't new struggles either — neither Central division has produced a pennant winner since the Chicago Cubs beat Cleveland in the 2016 World Series.

The way Central division clubs have managed their budgets, it's no surprise they've lagged behind



Minnesota Twins' Christian Vazquez (8) slides into third base safely ahead of the tag from Detroit Tigers third baseman Nick Maton (9) in the third inning of a baseball game, Sunday, June 25, 2023, in Detroit.

their East and West counterparts.

No team from either group ranked among the top 12 major league payrolls on opening day this season, but five of them fell in the bottom 10 — Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Kansas City and Milwaukee. No Central team has cracked the top 5 since the Cubs during the pandemic-shortened 2020 season.

Six of baseball's 10 smallest markets come from the Centrals, according to Nielsen, and only Chicago cracks the top 10. Not that small-market clubs can't spend big — San Diego's TV market is comparable to Kansas City, yet the Padres ranked third among opening day payrolls as they try to keep pace with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

No such behemoth in the Midwest has been forcing Central teams to invest and keep pace.

It's shown in the results. No

team from either Central division has even reached the League Championship Series since the 2019 St. Louis Cardinals.

But the gap separating the Central from the East and West is even larger than usual this year.

Part of the reason is a change by MLB to balance the schedule, forcing Central teams to play East and West foes more often. The 2023 schedule includes 52 games against division opponents, down from 76 in previous seasons.

It's also noteworthy that the defending AL Central and NL Central champions got off to slow starts.

One year after going 93-69 to win the NL Central, the Cardinals are last in the division with a 33-46 mark. St. Louis' team ERA has soared from 3.79 in 2022 to 4.46 this year. "We do believe we have a chance at this," Cardinals manager Oliver Marmol said. "But in reality,

if we're talking about (making it) sustainable, we're going to have to pitch better and we're going to have to continue to do what we do offensively." Cleveland fell below .500 on April 29 and has had a losing record since, though it hasn't stopped the Guardians from grabbing the AL Central lead. The .423 combined winning percentage for AL Central teams is on pace to be the worst ever for any major league division, surpassing the AL Central's .436 mark in 2018.

According to Sportradar, the last time an entire division was below .500 this late in the season was the NL West on July 24, 2008. The Los Angeles Dodgers won the NL West that year with an 84-78 record.

The Guardians' issues have centered on a light-hitting offense and injuries in its rotation. The Guardians are leaning on three rook-

ies including top prospect Gavin Williams as starters. Both the Cardinals and Guardians will try to repeat the late surges they made a year ago.

The Cardinals trailed the Brewers by four games on July 30 before going 40-21 down the stretch. The Guardians were under .500 as late as July 13 but went 49-26 the rest of the way including 16-4 in their last 20 games to run away with the AL Central by 11 games.

Guardians general manager Mike Chernoff believes that experience can help this year's squad.

"This is a team that I think is dying to be in situations like this," Chernoff said, "and thankfully with where our division is, we've been able to put ourselves in a place where we can continue to compete."

If nobody makes a similar run this year, the AL Central could make some unfortunate history.

The worst record ever owned by a division champion was 82-80 by the 2005 San Diego Padres.

The .423 combined win percentage for AL Central teams is on pace to be the worst ever for any major league division.

The AL Central already holds that record with its .436 combined winning percentage in 2018.

If nothing else, the unsettled nature of the races gives just about every Central division team a reason to believe. Only 5 1/2 games separate the top four teams in the AL Central. The top four teams in the NL Central are within five games of one another, and the last-place Cardinals are only nine back. □

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